

REMARKS

Claims 1-27 were examined in the final office action dated November 06, 2006. All the claims were rejected. By virtue of this amendment, claims 1, 8, 14 and 20 are sought to be amended to further define the invention. The amendments are believed not to introduce new matter and their entry is respectfully requested. Reconsideration is respectfully requested further in view of the below remarks.

Examiner Interviews

As noted above, a telephone interview was conducted on November 02, 2006 ("First Interview") and December 4 2006 ("second interview") with only Examiner Nguyen and the undersigned representative attending. Applicants and the undersigned representative thank Examiner Nguyen for granting the two interviews in spite of this case being in an after-final office action stage.

Both the interviews were attended only by Examiner Nguyen and the undersigned representative.

In the First Interview, the undersigned representative requested clarification on "Accelerated Examination" noted in the "Office Action Summary ..." section of the Office Action Mailed on 10/23/2006. In response, Examiner Nguyen kindly clarified that the sheet was sent in error and that a new office action would be issued in due course setting forth the appropriate applicable deadlines and procedure. Accordingly, the present outstanding office action dated 11/06/2006 was received. Applicants thank the Examiner Nguyen for the clarification as well as issuing the new office action.

The undersigned representative had also proposed the below agenda:

1. Go over the 'intended' interpretation of "physical port" and show the basis on which it is believed to be 'inherent'. Consider "port interface" as an alternative.
2. See if alternative languages would overcome the rejection under 112. Consider if an affidavit from an expert would overcome the rejection and consider the language in the affidavit.

3. Differentiate the "physical port" (or alternative language) from the "port number" of the references of record.

Examiner Nguyen declined to entertain the points above exercising the discretion in after-final stage. The undersigned representative requested consideration noting that the
5 Applicants agreed to file an RCE and that it would greatly further prosecution (an avowed objective of the Patent Office) if the undersigned representative is provided the opportunity to understand the 'mental process' of the Examiner in applying 35 U.S.C. § 112 First paragraph (written description requirement) with respect to the specific facts in the application.

10 After receiving the corrected Office Action on 11/06/2006, the undersigned representative requested another interview with Examiner Nguyen and Examiner Chin. The undersigned representative pointed out that the term "Physical port" is present in the specification (contrary to the assertions in the Office actions):

15 ".forwarding information (either directly or indirectly the specific interface/**physical port** on which the packet is to be forwarded)."

(line 20 page 12 of the specification, ***Emphasis Added***).

Examiner Nguyen was kind enough to grant another telephone interview, and the Second Interview noted above, followed. The Applicants and the undersigned representative thank the Examiner for the second interview, in spite of the after final stage.

20 In the Second Interview, Examiner Nguyen first agreed that the specific rejection with respect to the term "physical port" would be withdrawn in view of the information noted above. The undersigned representative then enquired whether the written description rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 would be withdrawn in its entirety when the RCE is filed in view of this agreement. Examiner Nguyen indicated the rejection could possibly be
25 maintained since there is other language in the claim which would still not overcome the written description rejection.

The undersigned representative invited Examiner Nguyen to permit discussion of the various portions of the specification which could serve the purpose of either identifying the specific language (to be included in the amended claims in the present response) that would overcome the art of record and/or addressing the outstanding written description rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Examiner Nguyen again declined the invitation noting that only the amendments and remarks in a formal response would be considered. The undesignated representative requested consideration noting that the Patent Office's goal of furthering prosecution would at least justify a brief discussion as noted in the preceding paragraph. The suggestion was again declined.

However Examiner Nguyen provided the opportunity to briefly discuss US Patent 6,888,837 issued to Cunningham et al (hereafter "Cunningham") and US Patent 6,331,984 issued to Luciani (hereafter "Luciani"), for which the Examiner is thanked. The undesignated representative pointed out again that the port numbers shown there are the TCP/UDP port numbers, which are distinct from the physical ports (identifying the communication paths) recited in the then pending claims.

Examiner Nguyen did not seem persuaded possibly due to ignoring the "physical port" in the then presented claims. The undesignated representative agreed to send a formal response appreciating the need to have the issues under 35 U.S.C. § 112 resolved before the intended claims can be properly examined under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102/103.

The Examiner is thanked also for already sending a duly completed Examiner Interview Summary form PTOL-413 for the interview of November 02, 2006. The Examiner is also requested to send the Interview Summary form PTOL-413 for the second interview of December 4 2006, if one has not already been sent.

The applicant is believed to have met the burden of making of record the Substance of the Interview. See MPEP 713.04 for further details.

Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112

Claims 1, 8, 14 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. In particular, it was stated in the Outstanding Office Action that:

5 Claims 1, 8, 14, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. Nowhere in the specification ***describes a plurality of physical ports or each of the plurality of physical ports being coupled to a corresponding one of a plurality of communication paths.*** The added limitations: "said forwarding information specifying one of said plurality of physical ports for forwarding said packet" was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

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(Final rejection dated 11/06/2006, ***Emphasis Added***)

The rejection is believed to be rendered moot in view of the removal of the reference to physical ports in the amended claims.

20 With a view to furthering prosecution, Applicants note at least some of the portions of the application which reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the invention presented in currently amended claim 1.

25 In particular, the language, "... a gateway device connected to a plurality of communication paths providing connection with corresponding networks" of currently amended independent claim 1 would be reasonably conveyed to one skilled in the relevant arts, for example, based on Figure 1 with SSG 150 connected to paths 125, 156 and 157.

30 Similarly the claimed language of, "said forwarding information specifying one of said plurality of communication paths to forward said packet; ... forwarding said packet with said new address on the specified one of said plurality of communication paths in said forwarding information" would be conveyed to one skilled in the relevant arts, for example,

based on lines 16-22 page 1 of the specification establishing the basic switching operation performed by gateways and indicating forwarding to be synonymous with routing in the present application, lines 3-9 page 5 of the specification setting the context of Internet Protocol (IP), Figure 2 of RFC 791 (entitled, "Internet Protocol: DARPA Internet Program: Protocol Specification") which shows Internet module selecting LNI-1 or LNI-2 as communication paths in forwarding packets, lines 1-3 of page 9 of the specification teaching that the forwarding information indicates the port/interface/direction in which to send a packet, and page 10 lines 8-14 of the specification equating three paths 125/156/157 with the corresponding three ports in the example embodiment there.

10 Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 with respect to claim 1 is respectfully requested.

15 The objection with respect to currently amended independent claim 8 is also believed to be overcome for at least some of above noted reasons in that the claim recites, "... a plurality of communication paths, wherein each communication path provides connection with a corresponding network; ... said forwarding information specifying one of said plurality of communication paths to forward said packet; ... forwarding said packet with said new address on the communication path specified in said forwarding information."

Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 with respect to claim 8 is respectfully requested. Withdrawal of the rejections with respect to other independent claims 14 and 20 is also requested for at least similar reasons.

To the extent the above explanation (or record otherwise) is found not to be persuasive to withdraw the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, the Examiner is invited to suggest alternative language which overcomes the rejections, as appears to be encouraged in MPEP Section 2163:

When appropriate, **suggest amendments to the claims** which **can be supported by the application's written description**, being mindful of the prohibition against the addition of new matter in the claims or description. See Rasmussen, 650 F.2d at 1214, 211 USPQ at 326.

(MPEP Section 2163.04.I.B, ***Emphasis Added***)

Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(e)

Claims 1-2, 8-9, 14-15 and 20-21 were rejected under U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by both US Patent 6,888,837 issued to Cunningham and Luciani. The rejections are believed to be rendered moot at least in view of the foregoing amendments, for reasons described below.

Currently amended claim 1 recites:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of processing a packet in a ***gateway device connected to a plurality of communication paths*** providing connection with corresponding networks, said method comprising:

providing a search utility in said gateway, said search utility enabling the ***retrieval of both a forwarding information and a network address translation (NAT)*** information necessary for processing said packet in a single search operation, wherein said NAT information specifies a new address for an original address in said packet, said forwarding information specifying one of said plurality of communication paths to forward said packet;

receiving said packet containing said original address;

determining said forwarding information and said NAT information for said packet in a single search operation by using said search utility;

substituting said new address for said original address in said packet; and

forwarding said packet with said new address on the ***specified one of said plurality of communication paths in said forwarding information.***

(Currently Amended claim 1, ***Emphasis Added***)

Thus a search utility in accordance with claim 1 retrieves forwarding information and NAT information in a single search operation, with the forwarding information specifying the communication path on which a packet is forwarded.

The art of record does not disclose or reasonably suggest such a feature.

In particular, it is Applicants position that the “Translated Destination Port” and “Destination Port” of Cunningham refer to the specific transport layer port numbers (e.g., User Datagram Protocol (UDP) or Transport Control Protocol (TCP) port number). In other words, the Destination Port of Cunningham merely represents a number used to identify a

TCP/UDP session and does not identify the communication path of claim 1. Thus, claim 1 is allowable over Cunningham.

Similarly, with respect to Luciani, the port of Luciani also is believed to refer to the specific transport layer port number (similar to in Cunningham) associated with the corresponding local and global addresses (fields 210 and 220 of Figure 2), at least based on the below disclosure:

... Since multiple Transport layer sessions may exist at any moment in time for a particular host to which an IP address is assigned, the table further **specifies the Transport layer port number (e.g., User Datagram Protocol (UDP) or Transport Control Protocol (TCP) port number) associated with the local and global** (Column 5, lines 34-39 of Luciani, **Emphasis Added**)

Thus, currently amended independent claim 1 is allowable over Luciani as well. Currently amended independent claim 14 is also allowable over the art of record for one or more of the above reasons.

Currently amended independent claim 8 is also allowable for one or more reasons noted above in reciting that "...a plurality of communication paths, wherein each communication path provides connection with a corresponding network; ... retrieval of both a forwarding information and a network address translation (NAT) information necessary for processing said packet in a single search operation, ... said forwarding information specifying one of said plurality of communication paths to forward said packet; ... forwarding said packet with said new address on the communication path specified in said forwarding information."

Currently amended independent claim 14 is also allowable for one or more of similar reasons.

The dependent claims are allowable at least as depending from corresponding allowable base claim.

Conclusion

Thus, all the objections and rejections are believed to be overcome, at least in view of the above remarks, and that all the presented claims are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned representative if it is believed that an interview might be useful for any reason.

Respectfully submitted,

/Narendra Reddy Thappeta/
Signature

Date: February 5, 2007

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